

ABSTRACT

Method and apparatus ^{for reducing} ~~reduce~~ the pumping duty cycle of a pump assembly associated with an oil, natural gas, or water well with a concomitant reduction in the wear associated with the pump down hole components. An engine is connected with a pump assembly through a pneumatically actuated clutch and a selected event is determined to actuate the clutch to connect the engine with the pump assembly. The selected events may be a timed cycle determined from observations or a direct determination of liquid level in the well bore so that hydrocarbon production is maintained from the well bore. A pressurized gas is supplied on the occurrence of the selected event to actuate the clutch to connect the pump assembly with the engine to remove liquid from the gas well to maintain hydrocarbon production from the well.